

Clerk of District Court

Department Overview

The Clerk of District Court is an elected office, serving a four-year term. The Clerk is responsible for the data input of legal filings and the attending and taking of minutes for all Court hearings for the two District Courts. FY 06 sees an increase in the number of courts from two to three effective on January 1, 2006.

The District Court receives documents from the two lower Courts on appeals or transfers because of money amounts asked for or because of the restrictions placed on the lower Courts as to the kind of cases that may be heard. The Clerk of District Court is responsible for all statutory requirements associated with case filings and has to be knowledgeable with Montana laws.

The Clerk of District Court is specifically required by law to sign orders in probate cases, judgments in civil cases and to issue bench warrants, summons, and subpoenas. The Clerk of District Court is also appointed as the Jury Commissioner to summon Jurors and to pay the costs for Jurors, as well as for all witnesses that qualify for Criminal Trials. The Clerk of District Court issues Marriage Licenses along with Genealogy research, Child Support collection, maintenance and property settlement monies, Criminal Bail Bonds, fines and restitution payments, receives and invests monies tendered into Court in Civil Law Suits.

For FY 06 the Clerk requested the addition of two positions, both were funded effective 12/1/05. The positions are a Deputy Clerk for the newly authorized third District Court and a File Clerk.

Department Goals

- To provide outstanding, dedicated professional legal assistance to the Public, District Court Judges, attorneys, victims and perpetrator.
- Maintain accurate and easily accessible records.
- Be the link between the public and the Judges.
- Provide professional and courteous access to the courts.

Recent Accomplishments

- Office divided into specific areas of knowledge to increase expertise and accountability;
- Instituted system of peer review reducing the number of errors.
- Developed process to maintain effectiveness and increased efficiency to deal with an increase of 192 cases filed between 2003 and 2004.
- Support and increase of 3,580 documents processed from 2003 to 2004.
- Files have been reviewed and 'old discovery' has been disposed of, with new discovery being processed when received.
- Records have been organized and databases created, updated and maintained for office.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Clerk of District Court

Department Budget

Object of Expenditure	Actual FY 2004	Budget FY 2005	Actual FY 2005	Request FY 2006	Preliminary FY 2006	Final FY 2006
Personnel	\$ 446,428	\$ 489,999	\$ 471,699	\$ 522,819	\$ 549,705	\$ 554,902
Operations	67,693	70,692	69,278	88,448	88,448	88,448
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	625	-	19,625	19,625	4,000
Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 514,121	\$ 561,316	\$ 540,977	\$ 630,892	\$ 657,778	\$ 647,350

Budget by Fund Group

General Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special Revenue Funds	514,121	561,316	540,977	630,892	657,778	647,350
Debt Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Project Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enterprise Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust & Agency Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 514,121	\$ 561,316	\$ 540,977	\$ 630,892	\$ 657,778	\$ 647,350

Funding Sources

Tax Revenues	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 382,782	\$ 387,782
Non-Tax Revenues	-	-	-	-	187,886	78,886
Cash Reappropriated	-	-	-	-	87,110	180,682
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 657,778	\$ 647,350

Department Personnel

Personnel Summary

No	FT/PT	Title	FTE
1	Full-Time	Clerk of District Court	1.00
1	Full-Time	Chief Deputy Clerk of Court	1.00
1	Full-Time	Dist. Crt Clk II/Acctg Clk III	1.00
11	Full-Time	District Court Clerk I	10.80
1	Full-Time	File Clerk	0.80
Total Program FTE			14.60

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2006 Budget Highlights

Personnel

- Two additional positions were approved effective 12/1/05 for the newly authorized 3rd District Court.

Operations

- Additional expenses are anticipated with the addition of the third district court relative to civil jury, witness and professional service expenses.

Capital

- Funding \$4,000 Capital Reserve for replacement of equipment within the department.

County Commission Goals/Department Response

The County Commission established a set of overarching goals for the county government. Listed below are the County Commission's goals, followed by the methods by which the Clerk of District Court is striving to fulfill those goals.

Exceptional Customer Service

- Customers receive kind and respectful service – 95% satisfaction – based on Comment card responses.
- Accurate information provided – Complete procedures manual by 7-1-06.
- Documents and requests processed in a timely and efficient manner – Written priority system completed and provided to employees.
- Court documents promptly transferred to recipients – 75% of documentation transmitted electronically.

Be Model for Excellence in Government

- Use best practices from throughout the state – contact other offices – implement three-year plan.
- Error free documents – 100% free of errors – errors tracked by type, employee and percentage.
- Technological upgrades – Research current and forthcoming systems.

Improve Communications

- Open electronic communication established – 100% information transferred where interest exists.
- Awareness of customer and employee satisfaction – Suggestion box – review of suggestions.
- Proactive planning for future space and staff needs – Information and requests received from Employees in December for inclusion in budget.

To be the Employer of Choice

- Two way responsive communication – Employee satisfaction survey – low employee turnover.
- Positive atmosphere – employee evaluations completed annually.
- Learning Opportunities – Improve employee knowledge and growth.

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WORKLOAD INDICATORS/PERFORMANCE MEASURERS

Workload Indicators

Indicator	Actual FY 2003	Actual FY 2004	Actual FY 2005	Projected FY 2006
1 . Track turnover rated for department activities				
2 . Number of case filings				
3 . Track complaint and responses				
4 . Full use of Programs by all courts				

Performance Measures

Measure	Actual FY 2003	Actual FY 2004	Actual FY 2005	Projected FY 2006
1 .				
2 .				
3 .				
4 .				
5 .				
6 .				

Commentary

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